

Gore announces fossil fuel emissions inventory at UN summit

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Former U.S. Vice President Al Gore speaks during a session at the COP27 U.N. Climate Summit, Wednesday, Nov. 9, 2022, in Sharm el-Sheikh, Egypt. Credit: AP Photo/Peter Dejong

A detailed inventory of the top known sources of greenhouse gas

emitters launched by former U.S. Vice President Al Gore at the U.N. climate summit in Egypt on Wednesday found that the top 14 individual polluters are all gas and oil fields and their associated facilities, despite their emissions being "significantly underreported."

The inventory was compiled by Climate TRACE, a coalition of researchers, data analysts and non-governmental organizations who use multiple open sources including satellite coverage, remote sensing and artificial intelligence to track who exactly is polluting, and how much.

Emissions stemming from oil and gas production were already estimated to be about double what was reported to the U.N. last year and new data on [methane leaks and flaring](#) suggests that emissions are likely three times higher than what was reported, Gore said. Methane is a greenhouse gas which is around 80 times more potent in the short term than carbon dioxide.

Gore said the data shows the extent of the "deep cut in greenhouse gas pollution we need to prevent the most catastrophic impacts of the climate crisis."

Hailing the launch of the inventory, the U.N. Secretary General said the data was vital to address a problem "in front of our eyes, but also hidden in plain sight."

"We have huge emissions gaps, finance gaps, adaptation gaps. But those gaps cannot be effectively addressed without plugging the data gaps. After all, it is impossible to effectively manage and control what we cannot measure," Antonio Guterres said.

Some 56 billion tons of greenhouse gas emissions were produced in 2021, and [the U.S. Permian Basin](#) was at the top of emitters with more than 200 million tons, the data said. Russia's Urengoykoye gas

field was second on the list with 152 million tons.

Saudi Arabia, which owns the giant energy company Aramco, produced 900 million tons of emissions from 252 oil and gas assets, the data showed. Egypt, the host of COP27, produces 383 million tons of emissions from 166 assets, with the country's giant offshore Zohr gas field was the top polluter followed by the capital city of Cairo.



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The data showed that power plants were responsible for just over 100

billion tons of emissions, or 26%, followed by manufacturing with around 68 billion tons, or 17%. Fossil fuel operations were responsible for around 65 billion tons of emissions.

Speaking to the plenary, U.N. Secretary-General António Guterres called the data a "critical source" of information that would help in fighting climate change.

"The problem is even greater than we were led to believe and that means we must work even harder to accelerate the phase out of all fossil fuels," he said.

Addressing Climate TRACE, he said: "You are making it more difficult to greenwash or—to be more clear—to cheat."

Gavin McCormick, a co-founder of Climate TRACE, said they estimated greenhouse gas emissions of nearly all the largest emitters globally.

McCormick added that climate negotiators and others working to combat climate change have described the data as "a game changer that can help them make better decisions and decarbonize faster."

The inventory was released as climate negotiators are convening in Sharm el-Sheikh in Egypt for two weeks to look for ways to implement global climate goals. The conference focuses on several prickly issues, including how to cut greenhouse gas emissions and boost finance for poor countries struggling with the impacts of climate change.

Al Gore said the world could reduce emissions by 50% by the end of this decade, and reach net zero by 2050, with the help of now-available technologies.

"We are capable of solving this crisis because once the world reaches true net-zero, temperatures will stop increasing in as little as three to five years," he said.

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